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FOR SPECIAL ENVOY WILLIAMSON AND AF A/S FRAZER FROM CHARGE
FERNANDEZ, AF/SPG

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [PTER](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: SUDAN: NARROW WINDOW FOR ACHIEVING U.S. OBJECTIVES

REF: A. KHARTOUM 44
[B](#). 07 KHARTOUM 1051

Classified By: CDA Alberto Fernandez, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) After seven years of intense diplomatic focus, U.S. efforts to secure a peaceful, stable, and transformed Sudan have accomplished much - ended the bloodiest and longest running civil war on the continent, saved several million Darfuri Sudanese who rely on US humanitarian assistance, pushed through a crucial UN resolution on Darfur in 2007 - but US policy objectives still face obstacles on myriad fronts. The country's ethnic diversity, geographic position in a volatile region, and political culture will always present a challenge to Western engagement. However, the U.S. has a probably a six month window before the American general election in November to lay the foundation for definitively ending the turmoil in Darfur, alleviating major obstacles to humanitarian operations, solidifying the country's unity, and securing the path toward a more pluralistic and democratic Sudan. To meet these policy goals within this timeframe, we should concentrate our efforts on four diplomatic objectives: full and expedited deployment of an effective peacekeeping force in Darfur, compliance with the 2007 Joint Communiqué on Humanitarian Activities, resolution of the Abyei dispute, and establishment of electoral mechanisms to meet the timeline of the CPA. Unless the U.S. is willing to take an even more belligerent stance toward Khartoum that edges on forced regime change, establishing an incremental framework of incentives for changing the trajectory of the bilateral relationship is the only real avenue now open to achieve our objectives. End summary.

Changing the U.S.-Sudan Trajectory

[1](#)2. (C) While reaching our policy goals in Sudan will require sophisticated diplomatic effort on a variety of fronts, none can be achieved without a change in the trajectory of the Washington-Khartoum relationship. The acrimony that now afflicts bilateral relations leaves us with little direct leverage over the National Congress Party (NCP)-dominated regime and curtails our ability to influence events. Khartoum has even recently threatened to terminate counter-terrorism cooperation--the fundamental aspect of our relationship--unless bilateral relations improve (reftel a). Many in the regime seem to now believe that the United States cannot deliver - neither on its threats nor on any tangible incentives to improve the relationship. Shifting the regime's calculations toward supporting our policy aims will require adept U.S. leadership that combines a calibrated and

realistic package of incentives for the GOS to meet critical benchmarks on Darfur and the CPA, and greater diplomatic coordination with Khartoum's economic partners. The U.S. must be prepared to offer incentives that are of interest to the GOS, and must be prepared to deliver on these promises despite the domestic political cost, if it hopes to affect the relationship in order to achieve our policy objectives. If the objectives and incentives are well-calibrated and the tangible objectives are mostly achieved, the incentives should be defensible to the American public.

13. (C) The U.S. probably has a six-month window before the American general election in November to develop a framework for adjusting the bilateral relationship in furtherance of our policy objectives. S/E Williamson's first trip to Sudan presents an opportunity to inaugurate this effort. Khartoum's mantra is that the U.S. has backtracked on promises to improve relations in exchange for the NCP's support for the CPA and the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). U.S. interlocutors must immediately re-establish credibility with key regime figures and move the relationship from one characterized by mutual recrimination to one based on incremental deliverables by each side. U.S. incentives must be sequenced to GOS cooperation on four key diplomatic objectives: full and unambiguous deployment of the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), tangible improvement of humanitarian access, real resolution of the Abyei dispute, and establishment of effective electoral mechanisms stipulated in the CPA.

Benchmark: UNAMID Deployment

14. (C) Achieving a lasting political settlement for Darfur that ends the recurring cycle of violence requires a more stable security environment. Deployment of an effective UNAMID force is the cornerstone of this goal, although UNAMID alone cannot bring peace to Darfur absent a political settlement between the fractious rebel movements and the Sudanese Government. The GOS's obligations to facilitate this deployment can be distilled to five targets: 1) Agree to a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) that meets UN standards; 2) Allocate land for UNAMID facilities that meet UN standards; 3) Accept the troop contributions proposed by the UN, irrespective of nationality (while maintaining the African preponderance of the force); 4) Permit UNAMID forces unobstructed access in Darfur, including night flights, as stipulated in the DPA and, by implication, in UN Security Council Resolution 1769, and 5) streamline visa, customs and other bureaucratic processes for UNAMID. The GOS must commit to meeting these targets and follow through expeditiously. These are, of course, steps the Sudanese regime has committed to undertaking to one extent or another and then not resolved.

Benchmark: Humanitarian Access

15. (C) The March 2007 Joint Communique between the Government of Sudan and the UN set out guidelines for bureaucratic procedures for international humanitarian operations in Darfur and established a high level committee to monitor the Government and the international community's obligations in the Communique. While the majority of international humanitarian organizations acknowledge that the Joint Communique has eased bureaucratic obstacles to some degree, the Government has not adhered to many of its stipulations. In addition, the Government's delay in extending the moratorium on humanitarian restrictions, expected to be announced on January 23 during the next high level committee meeting, means that approximately 13,000 humanitarian workers will be out of status on February 1 until their visas and residency permits can be re-issued. (Note: As reported septel, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs has promised the moratorium will be extended but has yet to obtain approval from President Bashir. EndNote.) Humanitarian organizations

also continue to confront local bureaucracies that do not adhere to the provisions of the Communiqué. By the end of February, the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) is expected to assess the Government's compliance with the Communiqué since March. The GOS must accept OCHA's assessment and take the necessary actions to address the lapses in compliance at both the federal and local level. The USG should encourage an unvarnished analysis by the UN/OCHA of the shortcomings in humanitarian access and press for full Sudanese compliance.

Benchmark: Abyei Resolution

¶16. (C) Negotiations on the CPA were almost derailed until then-Special Envoy Danforth devised the December 2004 Abyei Protocol establishing the Abyei Boundary Commission (ABC). The NCP has rejected the Commission's findings outright--in the words of President Bashir "they (the international community) can take the ABC report and choke on it." The NCP asserts that the ABC experts exceeded their mandate by ignoring the issue of the 1905 borders of the Ngok Dinka. An acceptable compromise solution will have to resolve the basic concerns about oil wealth and land rights, not just borders and local administration. The NCP must demonstrate that it is willing to engage in sincere negotiations with the SPLM on the root causes of the Abyei dispute and be willing to compromise. One possible solution would be to develop a formula for exchanging oil for land. While some SPLM officials are optimistic about progress on Abyei in recent weeks, we are less sanguine.

Benchmark: Electoral Mechanisms

¶17. (C) After several delays caused by the regime's unwillingness to provide funding and the Government of Southern Sudan's (GoSS) lack of capacity to complete geographic mapping, the national census is now scheduled for late April. Despite insecurity in Darfur, which may delay or prevent a census in that region, the GOS must facilitate the census as scheduled in the remainder of the country. In order to allow sufficient time for elections preparation before the July 9, 2009 deadline in the CPA, the GOS must also ensure the passage of a robust elections law meeting international standards by April 2008, and the Presidency must soon thereafter appoint a non-partisan nine-member National Electoral Commission. Finally, the GOS must accept the work of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) to provide guidance and technical assistance for the elections as outlined in UN Security Council Resolution 1590 and openly accept early and widespread monitoring by international organizations and NGOs, include American organizations such as NDI and IRI.

The Incentives

¶18. (C) An incremental framework for changing the trajectory of the U.S.-Sudan relationship will need to carefully and clearly link GOS efforts to meeting the four U.S. policy objectives above with reciprocal U.S. actions. Khartoum has been consistent in its definition of "improved relations:" removal of Sudan from the U.S. list of State Sponsors of Terrorism; meetings in Washington between senior Sudanese (really, NCP) officials and senior Bush Administration officials, elevation of the U.S. and Sudanese senior diplomatic representatives in Khartoum and Washington from Charge d'Affaires to Ambassador; establishment of a realistic timeline for the repeal of economic sanctions based on Sudanese responses; and expedited release of Sudanese detainees in Guantanamo Bay. We will need to determine the precise link between these possible incentives and our demands on Khartoum and articulate these linkages to the regime in exact terms. Removal of Sudan from the U.S. list

of State Sponsors of Terrorism may well be a Sudanese prerequisite for continued cooperation on counterterrorism according to the NISS.

¶9. (C) The U.S. should enlist Khartoum's allies in the diplomatic strategy to re-orient the bilateral relationship and achieve our policy objectives in Sudan. In the near term, we should outline for Sudan's major economic partners--China, India, Malaysia, and the Arab world--the strategic linkages between U.S. objectives and U.S. incentives. European countries like Germany have also paid lipservice to human rights concerns in Sudan while continuing to enjoy the fruits of Sudan's petroleum-induced largesse. These influential capitals can underscore to Khartoum that a (limited) opportunity exists to adjust relations with the U.S. if the GOS is willing to clearly meet the four benchmarks over the next six months. They can also re-inforce U.S. credibility with the Sudanese Government.

¶10. (C) Of course, all blame for the delay in UNAMID deployment, in easing bureaucratic restrictions for humanitarian operations, in finding a solution to the Abyei issue, and in adhering to the CPA does not rest at the feet of the NCP leadership, and we must continue to work in concert with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the disparate political elements in Darfur, the UN, the AU, and the international community. However, none of the issues that will determine Sudan's future course can be addressed without sincere buy-in from the core of the regime, a rogue's gallery skilled in deception and divided internally by competing ambitions. Unless the U.S. is willing to take a more belligerent stance toward Khartoum--advocacy of regime change, military support for the SPLM or the Darfur rebels in a confrontation with Khartoum, etc.--introducing incentives into the relationship is the only avenue now open for achieving our policy objectives. If we do decide to seriously consider an incentive package for the regime, we should, of course, not discount the possibility of a more confrontational stance with Khartoum as an added enducement. But both our threats and our blandishments should be real ones.

FERNANDEZ